

Council Meeting Summary Monday, August 7, 2006

Council Members in attendance:

Elaine Brown - Michigan Food and Farming Systems, Jim Byrum – MI Agri-Business Association, Keith Creagh – MI Department of Agriculture (Chair), Janet Cushman - MI Department of Human Services, Giancarlo Guzman - Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health, Mike Hamm - Michigan State University, Jim Herbert – Neogen Corporation, Mattie Jordan-Woods – Northside Association for Community Development, Cheryl Kobernik – North Star Organics, Jane Marshall - Food Bank Council of Michigan, JoAnn Merrick – MI Department of Environmental Quality, Justin Rashid - American Spoon Foods, Inc., Todd Regis - United Food & Commercial Workers Local 951, Leland Wheaton – Charlotte High School, Todd Wickstrom - Heritage Foods USA, Carol Wolenberg – MI Department of Education.

Other attendees:

Alethia Carr – MI Department of Community Health, Kathy Fedder – MI Department of Agriculture, Rich Harlow – MI Department of Agriculture, Marla Moss - Michigan Department of Education, Ken Nye – MI Farm Bureau.

Michigan Department of Agriculture Deputy Director Keith Creagh chaired the meeting, and began the meeting by welcoming council members and other participants with a round of introductions.

Task Forces A, B and D had one recommendation each for Council consideration. Mr. Creagh introduced each recommendation, and facilitated discussion and voting.

The following is a summary of the discussion and voting process for each recommendation. The recommendations, as included below, reflect the final language that was passed by Council members.

Discussion of Recommendations:

Recommendation A2: Encourage and support new and existing food processing businesses, and investigate meat-processing needs.

There was a very brief discussion of the implementation strategies for this recommendation, and the council decided to add language to include existing food processors in any state tax incentive programs.

✓The recommendation was passed, with amendments, with no objections.

Recommendation B2: Increase the numbers and success of school, community and urban gardens as a means to increase access to fresh and healthy food.

A council member proposed that we add language to the recommendation itself that highlights the opportunity to sell produce via Project FRESH certified vendors at WIC distribution clinics.

Another council member expressed frustration over the lack of understanding or sensitivity that some community gardening organizations demonstrate in relation to the communities in which they work.

✓The recommendation was passed, with amendments, with no objections.

Recommendation D1: Preserve a significant acreage of valuable Michigan farmland using a variety of temporary and permanent preservation techniques over the next twenty years, and maintain the viability and diversity of Michigan agriculture.

Council members discussed the propriety of identifying specific funding amounts and sources in this recommendation, and ultimately decided to recommend that the state determine the specifics of the program. The recommendation will contain more general possibilities for funding amounts and sources.

A council member expressed concern that farmland preservation efforts are generally exclusive of urban agricultural land (e.g. community gardens and urban farms), and suggested that we add language to include urban land in farmland preservation efforts and programs. The council ultimately decided to recommend that the state explore options to do this.

Another council member pointed out that farmland preservation programs alone are not nearly sufficient to preserve farms and farmers in the state of Michigan. Council members agreed wholeheartedly that this recommendation must be taken as part of a package with other MFPC recommendations to begin to address the viability of the farm venture.

Council members also agreed to add language that specifically recommends that the state examine and address the factors that are conducive to utility expansion into agricultural areas.

✓The recommendation was passed, with amendments, with no objections.

The three recommendations discussed and passed in this meeting are in addition to the seventeen recommendations passed in earlier meetings. The Council has passed twenty recommendations to date.

MFPC staff member Kristin Brooks quickly reviewed two of the documents that council members had in their packets: the Recommendations and Executive Order Goals chart,

and the Addressing Executive Order Goals document. Council members did not have comments on these documents.

Ms. Brooks pointed out to council members that the numbers associated with the recommendations up to this point would change, and all further communication will refer to recommendations by their new numbers. The new numbers are as follows:

- Rec. A1: Agri-Food Entrepreneurship (was A4)
- Rec. A2: Support for Food Processing (was A5)
- Rec. A3: Agricultural Processing Renaissance Zones (was A2)
- Rec. A4: Information and Collaboration Opportunities (was A1)
- Rec. A5: Supermarkets in Underserved Locations (was A3)

- Rec. B1: Healthy Food Access through Direct Markets (was B5)
- Rec. B2: School, Community and Urban Gardens (was B11)
- Rec. B3: Food Assistance Program (was B8)
- Rec. B4: Summer Food Service Program (was B7)
- Rec. B5: Nutrition Education (was B10)
- Rec. B6: Emergency Food Needs

- Rec. C1: Select Michigan Program (was C2)
- Rec. C2: Farm to School (was C3)
- Rec. C3: Department of Corrections (was C1)
- Rec. C4: Farmers' Market Support Program (was C4)

- Rec. D1: Farmland Preservation (was D6)
- Rec. D2: New Market Development (was D4)
- Rec. D3: Increasing Michigan Agriculture Visibility (was D3)
- Rec. D4: Workforce (was D5)
- Rec. D5: Role of MSU Extension (was D1)

Mr. Creagh reviewed the timeline for report completion and moved on to reviewing the draft report.

Mr. Creagh invited council members to share high-level comments and feedback on the draft report that each council member received in their packet prior to the meeting. He suggested, and council members agreed, that detailed comments should be shared with MFPC staff via e-mail or phone. Staff will incorporate comments, and send a revised draft to council members for further review (on or around August 9, 2006) before the deadline for final comments, which is August 18, 2006. MFPC staff will incorporate any final comments by August 23, 2006.

A council member asked what the plans are for releasing the final report and delivering it to Governor Granholm. Ms. Brooks responded that that decision will be made by the governor's office, in partnership with the Kellogg Foundation, and we will share information with council members as to the report release as it becomes available.

Mr. Creagh asked council members for final comments or feedback on the MFPC process and progress thus far. Council members suggested that meetings should not all be held in Lansing, conference calling should be an option for meetings, and listening sessions should be publicized more aggressively. Mr. Creagh thanked council members for their participation and asked them to fill out an evaluation questionnaire before they left.

Mr. Creagh opened the meeting for public comment. There were no public comments.